

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 03164 180730Z
ACTION EUR-12

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R 171941Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4990
INFO DOE WASHDC
DOE GERMANTOWN
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
ALL EC CAPITALS

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 03164

USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, TECH, PARM, EC
SUBJECT: BRUNNER ON FAST BREEDER REACTORS AND INFCE

REF: 77 BRUSSELS 9234

1. EC COMMISSIONER BRUNNER, DURING AN EC PARLIAMENT SESSION ON FEBRUARY 16, DELIVERED A STATEMENT THAT WAS STRONGLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S APPROACH TO NON-PROLIFERATION. HE WAS RESPONDING TO A PRO-BREEDER REPORT DRAWN UP ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND RESEARCH. THE COMMITTEE REPORT WAS AN ANALYSIS OF THE COMMISSION'S REPORT ON FAST BREEDER REACTOR DEVELOPMENT ISSUED IN JULY 1977 (REFTEL).

2. THE COMMITTEE REPORT URGED THAT COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIQUID METAL FAST BREEDER REACTOR NOT BE DELAYED.
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IT SUPPORTS ALSO THE CLOSING OF THE FUEL CYCLE BY CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF REPROCESSING PLANTS. TO REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF TERRORIST USE OF PLUTONIUM, THE REPORT ADVOCATES THE CONCENTRATION ON ONE SITE OF THE REPROCESSING PLANTS AND PLUTONIUM FUEL FABRICATION PLANTS.

3. IN HIS RESPONSE, BRUNNER SAID THAT THE COMMISSION, IN

ITS REPORT, DID NOT ASK FOR AN IMMEDIATE DECISION ON THE FAST BREEDER OPTION. HE SAID THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT R&D WORK ON FAST BREEDERS CONTINUE WITHOUT INTERRUPTION, BUT THAT INDUSTRIAL USE OF THESE REACTORS COULD BE JUSTIFIED ONLY AFTER THE PROBLEMS OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION HAVE BEEN SOLVED. (COMMENT: THIS WAS AN ACCOMMODATION TO THE ANTI-NUCLEAR VIEWS REVEALED AT THE RECENT EC-SPONSORED DEBATES ON NUCLEAR POWER). HE FURTHER SAID THAT THE DECISION TO FOLLOW ONE OR ANOTHER TECHNICAL OPTION SHOULD BE LEFT UNTIL THE WORLD HAS THE RESULTS OF INFCE.

4. BRUNNER REFERRED TO HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER ON JANUARY 6, SAYING THAT THE PRESIDENT IN NO WAY CAME OUT AGAINST A GROWING ROLE FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY IN THE WORLD'S ENERGY SUPPLIES AND THAT, RECOGNIZING THE ENERGY RESOURCE SITUATION IN EUROPE IS DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE U.S., HE EVEN STRESSED THAT HIS POSITION IS NOT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FAMILY OF FAST BREEDER REACTORS SO LONG AS THIS TECHNOLOGY IS NOT EXPLOITED UNTIL FULL CONTROL OF THE FUEL CYCLE IS ACHIEVED. THE COMMISSION, BRUNNER SAID, FULLY SHARES THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UNITED STATES REGARDING NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE DEMAND FOR REINFORCED CONTROL OVER THE NECESSARY TECHNOLOGY FOR THE PRODUCTION OF SUCH WEAPONS.

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5. THE PARLIAMENT APPROVED A RESOLUTION THAT, AMONG OTHER THINGS:

A. ASKS THAT STUDIES AND EXPERIMENTS ON THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF SODIUM-COOLED FAST BREEDER REACTORS, INCLUDING THE FUEL CYCLE, BE PURSUED;

B. REQUESTS THAT COMMUNITY REPROCESSING PLANTS BE LIMITED TO AS FEW AS POSSIBLE (BUT AS MANY AS NECESSARY);

C. INSISTS THAT ADEQUATE CHECKS BE CARRIED OUT AT COMMUNITY AND AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL FOR THE CONTROL OF PLUTONIUM AND THAT ALL CIVILIAN REPROCESSED PLUTONIUM BE SO TREATED DURING REPROCESSING AS TO REDUCE ITS SUITABILITY FOR FABRICATION OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES;

D. REQUESTS THE COMMISSION TO ENCOURAGE THE STUDY OF ANY MEASURES WHICH MIGHT IMPROVE THE TECHNICAL, ECONOMIC, AND INDUSTRIAL SOLUTIONS FOR ENSURING THAT FISSILE MATERIAL, IN PARTICULAR PLUTONIUM, IS USED ONLY FOR PEACEFUL ENDS;

E. APPROVES THE COMMISSION'S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT THE

DEVELOPMENT OF SODIUM-COOLED FAST BREEDER REACTORS, BUT
ASKS THAT STUDY AND RESEARCH BE CARRIED OUT ALSO ON OTHER
FAST BREEDER CYCLES, IN PARTICULAR THOSE WHICH ARE COM-
PLETELY FREE OF ANY RISK OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROLIFERATION;

F. CONSIDER THAT ONLY WHEN THE FIRST COMMERCIAL DEMONSTRATION
FAST BREEDER REACTORS HAVE BEEN OPERATING FOR AN ADE-
QUATE TIME CAN A DECISION BE MADE FOR FURTHER DEPLOYMENT.
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